

Colorado College Sustainable Purchasing Guidelines

A. Goal

Colorado College is committed to stewardship of the environment and to reducing the college's dependence on non-renewable energy. These "sustainable purchasing" guidelines are intended to help the Colorado College community align purchasing decisions with the Colorado College mission objectives. These procurement decisions include economic criteria, environmental criteria, and social criteria.

The goal of these guidelines is to reduce the adverse environmental impact of our purchasing decisions by buying goods and services from manufacturers and vendors who share our commitment to the environment. Sustainable purchasing is the method whereby environmental and social considerations are given equal weight to the price, availability, and performance criteria that colleges and universities use to make purchasing decisions.

These guidelines will help the college to:

- Conserve natural resources by minimizing the consumption of non-replaceable natural resources through the review of current and proposed future usage; and encourage continuous evaluation of the sustainable pros and cons of alternatives
- Minimize pollution and waste, including: any packaging, waste produced by the commodity or service, and waste generated by the eventual disposal of the commodity
- Reduce the use of water and energy
- Reduce waste materials that are land filled
- Maximize the reuse and recycling of materials
- Increase the purchase and use of environmentally preferable commodities
- Create a model for successfully purchasing environmentally preferable commodities and services that encourages other purchasers in our community to adopt similar goals and best practices
- Stimulate demand for "environmentally friendly" commodities and services by educating manufacturers, suppliers, and service providers about the college's expectations of environmental performance and best practices
- Support "locally produced" goods and services
- Educate ourselves, vendors, service providers, and our end users to adopt sustainable best practices in purchasing goods and services

B. Areas of Focus

1. Product and Services Sustainability Selection Criteria

The College will apply the following sustainability criteria when evaluating products and services purchases.

- Electronic Product Environmental Assessment Tool (EPEAT): EPEAT is a system designed to help purchasers evaluate, compare, and select desktop computers, notebooks, and monitors based on their environmental attributes.
- Energy Star: A program of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) that aims to reduce energy usage by identifying products that meet specific standards for energy efficiency and features.
- Green Seal: Uses scientific criteria to choose environmentally preferable options from a wide range of consumer products, which are then identified with the Green Seal Logo. Sodexo custodial service provider for the College is Green Seal Certified. Reference Green Cleaning Chapter: [Facilities-Sustainable-OM-Guidelines-Manual-Rev.-10-26-21.pdf \(coloradocollege.edu\)](#)
- Life Cycle Cost Analysis (LCCA): Do not make project funding decisions based on first costs only. Evaluate life-cycle costs of design alternatives to reduce long term operating and maintenance costs of major building systems. Always use LCCA criteria to evaluate energy and water using products, building systems, and building system components. Reference: [Facility Life Cycle Design Guidelines for Sustainability \(coloradocollege.edu\)](#)
- Sustainable Purchasing Preferences: Purchasing preferences across multiple commodity categories shall include post-consumer recycled or bio-based content; carbon neutral products; products and services that minimize negative environmental impacts
- The College shall support: Disadvantaged businesses; Social Enterprises; Local Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs); in support of positive social and economic impacts, and minimizing negative impacts
- Preferred Vendors and Service Providers: Reward vendors and service providers who demonstrate social and environmental responsibility beyond basic legal compliance, and who reduce negative environmental impacts in their production, distribution systems, and services
- Product Sustainability Criteria: Products and Services evaluations and selection must address specific sustainability challenges and impacts in each commodity category

2. Source Waste Reduction Practices

Reducing unnecessary waste at the source allows the College to both mitigate the inefficient use of our natural resources and benefit economically from decreased handling and disposal costs.

Procurement activity may include:

- Develop practices that reduce waste, resulting in the purchase of fewer products whenever practicable and cost-effective, without sacrificing safety or work quality
- Purchase remanufactured products such as laser toner cartridges, tires, furniture, equipment and automotive parts when practicable, without sacrificing quality or effectiveness
- Purchase products that are durable, long lasting, reusable or refillable
- Request that vendors eliminate packaging or use the minimum amount necessary for product protection
- Request packaging that is reusable, recyclable, or compostable
- Reuse pallets and packaging materials

3. Energy Efficiency and Water Savings

The College values products that reduce the generation of electricity and recognizes that water is a finite resource.

Procurement activity may include:

- Energy efficient equipment with energy efficient functions and high-efficiency heating and cooling systems
- Energy efficient lighting
- Water saving products
- Programmable thermostats
- Energy efficient window treatments
- Energy efficient building products

4. Landscaping Sustainable Practices

Supporting low maintenance and environmentally sensitive landscapes minimizes the unnecessary use of fertilizers and water resources, therefore reducing the College's impact on the natural resources.

Procurement activity may include:

- Use of sustainable landscape management techniques for design, construction and maintenance. Some of these techniques may include drip irrigation, composting, and procurement of mulch and compost.
- Place preference on native and drought tolerant plants that require no or minimal watering.
- Procure permeable substitutes such as permeable asphalt or pavers for walkways, patios or driveways.
- Utilization of non-potable water as a watering source

- Utilization of programmable weather stations for control over irrigation operation systems.
- Utilize Integrated Pest Management (IPM) practices. Use pesticides only as a last resort. When they are used, select the least-toxic product.

5. Toxics and Pollution Minimization Practices

The use of toxics and the generation of pollution should be minimized to reduce risks to health, safety, and the environment.

Procurement activity may include:

- Procure products with the lowest amount of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and low or no formaldehyde in materials such as paint, carpeting, adhesives, furniture and casework.
- Consider vehicle procurement alternatives to those powered by gasoline and diesel fuel solely, such as bio-based fuels, hybrids, and electric battery powered vehicles.
- Avoid purchasing toxic chemicals or products containing toxic chemicals. Choose environmentally preferable chemicals and products.

C. Guidelines and Criteria for Commodities and Service Categories:

1. Consumable Office Supplies:

- Eliminate virgin paper by purchasing only recycled content paper when possible
- Print and copy double-sided to decrease paper use when practicable.
- Purchase recycled content paper goods (i.e., file folders)
- Purchase refillable and reusable products (such as pens and pencils) made from recycled materials.
- Purchase re-furbished and / or remanufactured toner cartridges.
- Purchase low mercury content lamps for lighting.
- Purchase rechargeable batteries.

2. Furniture and Furnishings:

- Require approved furniture vendors to provide a minimum warranty on chairs, office panels, work stations and filing systems.
- Ensure that all wood and wood contained within the products that the college purchases is certified to be sustainably harvested by a comprehensive, performance-based certification system.
- Purchase or use of previously used or salvaged wood and wood products is encouraged.
- Request that the furniture can be fully recycled at the end of its useful life.

- Request sustainable fabrics for modular systems and chairs. Some of these fabrics include recycled content and are designed to be biodegradable after their useful life.
- Specify products that are made from materials containing the maximum amount of post-consumer and post-industrial recycled content.
- Require vendors and installers to provide a recycling or recovery service for the responsible reuse, remanufacture, or recycling of old furniture.
- Require that furniture and furnishings to include flooring, ceilings, walls, and composite wood products are low-VOC or free of flame-retardants.

3. Electronics, Appliances, and Computers:

- Purchase Energy Star rated equipment and EPEAT registered products, and electronics, which specifies that energy saving features, are enabled as the default factory setting.
- Centralize and share appliances such as refrigerators, copiers, printers, and faxes.
- Provide a process for recycling of old computers, electronic devices, and appliances.
- Purchase laboratory products with the ACT label, which is the premier label for environmentally friendly laboratory products, including [consumables](#), [chemicals](#), and [equipment](#). By emphasizing accountability, consistency, and transparency (ACT) around manufacturing, energy and water use, packaging, and end-of-life, ACT makes it easy to choose safe, sustainable products.

4. Chemically Intensive Products and Services:

- Minimize the use of intensive chemicals in buildings and facilities maintenance activities.
- Minimize the use of intensive chemicals in cleaning and sanitizing activities.
- Minimize the use of intensive chemicals in landscaping and grounds maintenance activities.
- Always consider purchasing environmentally preferable chemicals and products.

5. Garments and Linens:

- Purchase clothing and bedding textiles with organic, bio-based, or recycled content.
- Establish textile-recycling processes that involve the donation, collection, sorting and processing of textiles, and then subsequent transportation to end users of used garments, rags or other recovered materials.
- Ensure that the manufacturer of textile products purchased by the College complies with The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), which is the Federal law that governs the payment of wages and various workplace practices. This law is enforced by the Wage and Hour Division of the United States Department of Labor.

6. Food Service Providers:

- Food service contractors, franchises, vending, and catering services providers are required to include sustainability practices and objectives in their contracts with the College.
- Food service contractors for the College are required to pay a living wage to employees in line with the College employee pay scales.

7. Contractors and Professional Service Providers Selection Process:

- The College process for selection of contractors and consultants shall include requests for services from disadvantaged businesses, defined as A Small Disadvantaged Business (SDB), which is a small business that is at least 51 percent owned by one or more individuals who are both socially and economically disadvantaged.
- The College process for selection of contractors and consultants shall include requests for services from social enterprises or social businesses, defined as a business that has specific social objectives that serve its primary purpose. Social enterprises seek to maximize profits while maximizing benefits to society and the environment.
- The College process for selection of contractors and consultants shall include requests for services from Certified B Corporations, defined as businesses that meet the highest standards of verified social and environmental performance, public transparency, and legal accountability to balance profit and purpose.

8. Transportation and Fuels Usage Guidelines:

- The College manages the vehicle fleet in a sustainable manner, providing adequately sized vehicles to efficiently transport larger groups in fewer vehicles for out-of-town trips to reduce the environmental impact of travel.
- The College provides energy efficient fleet vehicles and alternate fuel/hybrid vehicles for small groups to reduce the environmental impact of travel.
- Academic departments in the College are required to plan field trips in a sustainable manner that minimizes the travel and environmental impact of travel. An internal carbon tax used for sustainability projects is added to the mileage rate charged for fleet vehicles to help provide awareness by the users of the carbon footprint of their trips.
- The College grounds, maintenance, and service vehicles include alternate fuel electric vehicles and small fuel-efficient carts for maintenance workers to reduce the environmental impact of travel on campus.
- Larger purchased items requiring pallets, or large packaging, for shipping to the College are routed on long-haul transport carriers efficiently hauling aggregated loads destined for the same delivery area.
- Emergency building generators for campus buildings are required to be powered by clean natural gas rather than diesel fuel.
- The College Central Heating Plant is required to use the latest and most efficient control technologies, and heat recovery systems, to minimize the natural gas fuel usage required for heating major campus buildings.

D. Request for Proposals or Quotes, Contracts, and Purchase Orders:

Include sustainability language and specifications for environmentally preferable products and services into the documented purchasing processes. By including such criteria, vendors will be required to accommodate these needs in an agreed upon manner. Creation of a general clause that is included in all agreements, and incorporating the appropriate language as needed on a commodity-by-commodity basis is intended to increase the flow of sustainable products to the College Campus.

E. Energy Service Company Performance Contracts:

Performance contracting is an option to consider to ensure that promised savings from energy efficiency investments truly materialize. A performance contractor, known as an “energy service company,” may install high-efficiency lighting systems, air handling systems, boilers and so forth. The ESCO guarantees that a certain minimum level of savings will accrue to the client. If the savings do not materialize, the company pays the difference and makes improvements until the installations perform properly. If such contracts are structured appropriately, the savings from the efficiency improvements will be sufficient to service the debt to pay for the efficiency measures. The debt can also cost less as the result of the lender understanding performance contracting and energy savings that are virtually guaranteed by the ESCO.

F. Renewable Energy Purchases

Power Purchase Agreements (PPA) can be used for renewable energy purchases. PPA’s are used to stabilize energy costs for 20 or more years, depending on the life expectancy of the systems. Wind and solar systems have 40 years of life expectancy. PPA’s are typically designed to pay out the cost of the system in 10 years or less.

F. Green Building Materials Purchases

Green purchasing concepts shall be integrated into architectural designs, final construction documents for construction and renovations of buildings or facilities owned by the College. All buildings and renovations undertaken by the College shall follow green building practices for design, construction, and operations, where appropriate, as described in the LEED Rating System. Reference: [Facility Design Guidelines Manual](#)

When maintaining buildings, products such as paint, carpeting, adhesives, furniture and casework with the lowest amount of volatile organic compounds (VOC's), highest recycled content, and low or no formaldehyde shall be used.

All carpet distributors and/or manufacturers of carpet installed at the college shall have a carpet recycling plan that is approved by Facilities Services.

The use of chlorofluorocarbon and halon-containing refrigerants, solvents, and other products are being phased out, and new purchases of heating/ventilating/air conditioning, refrigeration, insulation, and fire suppression systems shall not contain them.

Types of Green Building Materials Purchases may Include:

- Recycled carpet
- Flooring Material
- Ceiling Tiles
- Roofing Materials